

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

THE EXTREME GOD

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Revelation 3:15-16

The Bible is a book given unto men to reveal the glory of its AUTHOR. HE sets forth both HIS character and power in every page therein. HE is singularly complete, and nothing can be added to HIM nor anything taken away. HE is an absolute GOD. HE is subject to no one or thing except HIS own self. Even though Men are driven by their quest to uncover those things which they do not know, yet none of HIS creation have the ability to gain any knowledge of HIM except that HE is pleased to reveal it.

Zophar the Naamathite, was one of Job's "miserable comforters" and "physicians of no value". He did little to ease the suffering of Job or to exhibit pity towards him, for those things which the LORD directed Satan to bring upon Job. Yet he was enabled to speak some things which were true, and none more apropos or accurate than when he said, "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him? For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider it? For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt." (Job 11:7-12)

Seldom is the ire and rancor of man towards GOD stirred in greater measure, that when HIS absolute rule and authority is set forth before them. We see this in the beginning when Eve was deceived while the question of HIS right to do with HIS own as HE wills was whispered to her by the Serpent. "Yea, hath GOD said." In essence he was saying; what right does GOD have to make these prohibitions and keep back some knowledge from you which you rightly deserve. Adam, upon a contemplation of this thought, did willingly eat of that forbidden fruit, plunging his posterity into darkness and condemnation.

Paul recognizes the same rebellious nature which is rooted in the heart of men when he takes away the grounds upon which men will protest against GOD's sovereign right to fulfill HIS own purpose. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" (Rom 9:18-21)

Man in his natural religion (of whatever type) considers that he can define and know GOD, according to several degrees of limitations which they consider they can place upon HIM. They are somewhat content in their knowledge and seldom question themselves about those dogmas and thoughts which have become sacred in their minds over time. Job was in a great measure in such a place. Yet GOD who is rich in mercy, designed his multiple trials, along with his and his

cohort's reasonings, to bring Job to that place when he would confess that in reality he knew nothing at all about HIM who is the true and living GOD as the LORD revealed HIMSELF. *"Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."* (Job 42:3-6)

The Psalmist declared the limitations of men in this regard. *"LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah."* (Psa 39:4-5) Paul said, *"And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."* (1Cor 8:2) *"For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."* (Gal 6:3) At our very best we "see through a glass darkly".

Any time that we would seek to set forth the perfections of the ALMIGHTY, we must do so with our face to the ground and our hand upon our lips lest we speak ill advisedly thereby, for at our best, we are full of vanity and ignorance. Yet we are compelled to give glory unto HIS great and mighty name and to declare the unsearchable riches of CHRIST with what little understanding we may have.

Many tell us that we should not be quite so "extreme" in our desire to publish the glory of HIM who predestinates all things. That we should be somewhat "moderate" so as not to confuse men or give them the wrong impression. We do confess that by nature we find this to be a wise course of action, yet when we read the Holy Scriptures we find that the LORD HIMSELF is quite extreme in HIS own declaration of the revelation of HIMSELF. *"I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things."* (Isa 45:5-7) *"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."* (Rev 22:13)

So, while it seems prudent to the natural understanding to take sort of a middle of the road approach and as some say "don't overemphasize" the sovereignty of GOD, but "maintain a balance" which recognizes both GOD's sovereignty and "man's responsibility". Man is accountable for his actions to be sure, but GOD is responsible for all things according to HIS decree. Thus, it is in the extreme that the LORD would have glory. HE even sets this forth in HIS admonition to the Church at Laodicea, telling them to be either cold or hot, but not lukewarm.

HE has revealed HIS "extreme" justice in sending forth HIS only begotten SON to die for sinners, "extremely" satisfying HIS own law in their behalf. *"To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."* (Rom 3:26) This RIGHTEOUSNESS is in itself "extreme", for there is absolutely no other RIGHTEOUSNESS in which a man may stand in the presence of a HOLY GOD.

This work of CHRIST in redemption is an "extreme" demonstration of the "extreme" love which HE has for that people which HE chose in CHRIST from before the foundation of the world. *"having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."* (John 13:1) *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."* (John 15:13) *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* (Rom 5:8)

Nothing can be more "extreme" than the triumph of CHRIST over sin and death, as HE broke the bonds of mortality, rising from the grave in the same body (though glorified) in which HE walked among men in this world. Thus, HE has demonstrated the "extreme" measure to which HE would go in bringing many sons unto glory. HE has given HIS people an "extreme" inheritance, making *"them heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."* (Rom 8:16-17) HE will lose none of those which have been given to HIM. May we fall down together and worship our "extreme" SAVIOR. mam